

**Litchfield Board of Finance
Special Meeting Minutes
March 30, 2015**

Call to Order: Chairman David Geiger called the meeting to order in the LIS Art Room at 7:04pm with David Wilson, Anne Dranginis, Mitchell Fishman and Brenda Barnes present. Absent: Ed Gadomski, Ed Weik (Alt.), Sky Post (Alt.)
Also present: Leo Paul, David T. Wilson, Jack Healy, Art Poole, David Fiorillo, Lynn McMullin, Frank Simone, Jeff Zullo, John Campbell, John McKenna

Board of Education Budget Proposal:

Chairman Geiger said that at the March 16 BOF special meeting, the BOE was asked if they could consider cuts in areas of their budget presented at that meeting. He noted that their spending plan represented a 3.6% (\$603,340) increase over last year's budget. He told Superintendent Lynn McMullin that the BOF did not request specific cuts, just a percentage of cuts, and would be more likely to support a budget increase between 2.25%-2.5%.

Superintendent McMullin distributed copies of the BOE revised 3-23-15 budget proposal which depicted cuts already made based on new information received after the BOE adoption of the budget on 3-4-15. These cuts included the salary for David Fiorillo, the new BOE Business Manager, savings realized from the CT State Police dropping their proposed background checks fee for chaperones and volunteers, a health insurance claims decrease, and reducing the number of technology replaces from 50 to 25. There were also three scenarios of Tier I, II and III Cuts for potential reductions.

Superintendent McMullin answered questions on various specific cuts: the possibility of not replacing an FTE teacher, elimination of some transportation costs if coaches were van-certified, elimination of the LHS indoor track since only 6 students used it, paying for the Math Curriculum in 2 equal instalments and one of the deepest cuts – eliminate LMS athletics since there is an excellent town recreation program for this age group.

Art Poole explained why Special Education staff were part of a state mandate and could not be cut, and why lower grades' report cards were still being done manually.

Vice Chairman David Wilson said there was a large increase in last year's BOE budget and he would like to receive input from the new Business Manager once Mr. Fiorillo is here longer.

Public Comment on the Board of Education Budget Only:

There were several comments from residents on the proposed education budget. Some expressed support, but one resident spoke against it, asking why educational costs are rising while the student population is decreasing. There was a suggestion to choose a different combination of cuts that might result in the amount the BOF is seeking and one resident spoke admiringly of Superintendent McMullin but thinks athletics are vital to keep students busy and avoid drug use. One resident questioned why the BOE received a windfall increase last year and now needs to

increase this year's budget. It was also noted that seeking more interns to reduce staff expenses could be facilitated by providing free room and board.

Board of Selectmen Capital & Debt Service Budget

Treasurer David T. Wilson said one-third of the \$3,280,054 capital budget is for major road and bridge projects. Leo Paul said all groups requesting capital projects turn in requests to the Capital Committee for review. He said \$2.2Mil for bridge repair is a large part of the spending plan. All of these completed projects will have a 15-year lifespan.

Jack Healy discussed various road repairs and new drainage. He said some of the work such as paving and curbs is subcontracted but most of the work is performed by Public Works employees.

In reply to Chairman Geiger's question if the BOF had requested Jack Healy to present a 3-tier scenario similar to the BOE's proposal, what projects could be eliminated, Treasurer Wilson said none of them since these are capital items on a 5-year plan that have been pushed out for too many years and must be done now.

Jack Healy answered questions about the salt shed, underground tanks, the \$25,000 marquee sign for LHS, Sandy Beach restoration, Northfield ball field, Litchfield Community Field and drainage.

John Campbell addressed questions about line items for the Fire department including the apparatus sinking fund and town wide air pack replacement.

Public Comment on the Board of Selectmen Capital & Debt Service Budget Only

Selectman Jeff Zullo said the BOF is doing due diligence but the BOS budget is too high and must be put in perspective: a \$3Mil capital budget will impact too negatively on taxpayers. A resident said the outdoor sign was an excessive cost.

Chairman Geiger said he believes the BOS budget can be trimmed but is not certain that the Capital budget can be trimmed.

Chairman Geiger said the next BOF meeting would be the regular meeting on April 13, 2015. As this is a school holiday, the venue would have to be changed.

Adjournment:

Motion: Anne Dranginis moved to adjourn at 9:15pm and Mitchell Fishman seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Jaacks
Recording Secretary